

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 H-03 DODE-00 SS-20

SP-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 IGA-02

AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-19

PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00 EUR-25 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 196159

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SA, FT, SO

SUBJECT: SAG CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN HORN IN AFRICA

REFS: (A) JIDDA 5092 (B) STATE 156317

1. ETHIOPIA: THIS MESSAGE SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION
WITH REF (B) WHICH PROVIDED AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA AS OF JULY 19 TO BE USED WITH
GOVERNMENT OF IRAN. JIDDA AND TEHRAN MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING
WITH APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

2. SINCE THAT DATE SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED
WHICH OBLIGE US TO QUALIFY OUR STATEMENT ON THAT
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OCCASION (PARA 4 REF B) THAT THE ARMED FORCES COORDINATING

COMMITTEE'S (AFCC) ACTIONS AND WORDS HAVE REFLECTED MODERATION. ORDER AND DISCIPLINE ARE SO FAR STILL IN EVIDENCE BUT VARIOUS SPOKESMEN FOR AND STATEMENTS OF THE AFCC HAVE MADE INCREASINGLY BITTER AND VINDICTIVE ATTACKS ON THE IMPERIAL ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT'S (IEG) PAST PERFORMANCE IN MANY FIELDS, EXPRESSED IN RADICAL-POPULIST LANGUAGE. OTHER TARGETS HAVE BEEN THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE AND THE WAY OF LIFE AND ACTIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL OLIGARCHY AND NOBILITY. IN THE FIELD OF ACTION THE FOLLOWING STEPS TAKEN BY THE AFCC ALSO DENOTE A GENERALLY MORE RADICAL IMAGE.

3. HARSH TREATMENT OF HAILE SELASSIE. ALTHOUGH HE IS STILL THE TITULAR CHIEF OF STATE AND SIGNS OFF ON THE APPOINTMENTS OF NEW MINISTERS AND PRESUMABLY OTHER STATE PAPERS, THE EMPEROR HAS BEEN PUBLICLY HUMILIATED BY THE CRITICISM NOTED ABOVE AND THE REMOVAL OF HIS PERSONAL STAFF UNITS THROUGH WHICH HE EXERCISED INFLUENCE IN MILITARY, JUDICIAL, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL FIELDS. HE IS VIRTUALLY ISOLATED FROM EVEN HIS FAMILY, HEAVILY GUARDED AND APPARENTLY NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE ADDIS ABABA. ARRESTS OF SOME OF HIS CLOSEST COLLABORATORS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE GROUND OF HIS PALACE WHICH IS NO LONGER EVEN HIS, HAVING BEEN APPROPRIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT ALONG WITH SOME OF HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS. THE AFCC NO LONGER PROCLAIMS ITS ALLEGIANCE TO THE EMPEROR AND ITS RHETORIC AND THE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MOUNTED AGAINST HIM WITH IMPUNITY HAVE LED SOME OBSERVERS TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ON HIS WAY OUT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE REPORTED DIVISIONS WITHIN THE AFCC CONCERNING THE DESIRABILITY OF HIS OUSTER. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE MONARCHY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO SURVIVE HIS DEPARTURE.

4. INCREASING ARRESTS AND SOME BLOODSHED. THE NUMBER OF FORMER OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF THE NOBILITY UNDER ARREST HAS NOW RISEN TO 150 AND INCLUDES MIDDLE RANKING CIVIL SERVANTS AMONG WHOM ARE MANY MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY. A FORMER OFFICIAL WAS KILLED RESISTING ARREST THIS WEEK AND ANOTHER MAY HAVE BEEN, THE FIRST CONFIDENTIAL

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KNOWN FATALITIES TO OCCUR SINCE THE AFCC WENT INTO ACTION LAST JUNE 28.

5. A NEW PRIME MINISTER UNDER AFCC DOMINATION. ON JULY 28 A NEW PRIME MINISTER, MIKAEL IMRU, WAS SWORN IN, REPLACING ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN, WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ARRESTED. A TRIAL OF STRENGTH OCCURRED RIGHT AWAY BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIANS OVER THE

COMPOSITION OF THE CABINET AND MIKAEL WAS FORCED TO BACK DOWN, ALTHOUGH THE MILITARY ALLOWED HIM A FACE-SAVING DELAY IN REPLACING SOME OF HIS APPOINTEES TO WHOM THEY OBJECTED. LATER THE MILITARY AND THE CABINET JOINED FORCES TO PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIONS BY ETHIOPIANS VETERANS OF THE CONGO AND KOREA WHO HAD JUST BEEN DENIED A BELATED BONUS PAYMENT THEY CLAIMED WAS DUE TO THEM. THE CHANGE IN PRIME MINISTERS WAS APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BY DISLIKE FOR ENDA'KACHEW, A HOLDOVER FROM THE PREVIOUS DISCREDITED REGIME AND LONG

ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARISTOCRACY, AND DESIRE TO GET SOMEONE IN THE OFFICE MORE ATTUNED TO THE REFORMIST-MINDED AFCC. THERE WAS ALSO THE PROBLEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY HAD COME TO A STANDSTILL DUE TO THE DIVISION OF AUTHORITY BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIANS, RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF SENIOR BUREAUCRATS TO DO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT LAND THEM ON THE AFCC'S ARREST LIST, AND INSUBORDINATION IN THE LOWER ECHELONS.

6. TALK OF FOREIGN POLICY REVISION. AN EDITORIAL APPEARED IN AN ADDIS ABABA DAILY ON AUGUST 21, PRESUMABLY WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE AFCC, QUESTIONING THE DESIRABILITY OF A NATION'S (READ ETHIOPIA) CONTINUING TO RELY ON AN ASSOCIATION (READ PRO-WEST AND PRO-US) WHICH DID NOT ADEQUATELY SERVE ITS INTERESTS (READ INADEQUATE US RESPONSE IN ARMS AID TO THE SOMALI THREAT). WHILE THIS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS PRESSURE FOR MORE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE IT IS ALSO INDICATIVE OF THE NEW REGIME'S GREATER WILLINGNESS TO EXAMINE CRITICALLY PAST PREMISES OF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

7. SOVIET INTEREST IN ETHIOPIA. ALTHOUGH SOME
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INDIVIDUALS HAVE SUSPECTED SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OR ANY INDICATION TO THAT EFFECT. WHILE THE SOVIET UNION WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO IMPROVE ITS STANDING IN ADDIS ABABA, THE LARGE STAKE IT HAS IN SOMALIA WOULD PRECLUDE IT FROM ACTING TOO HASTILY OR OBVIOUSLY TO THAT END.

8. COMMENT: WHILE THE ABOVE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BESPEAK A LESS MODERATE IMAGE FOR THE AFCC THE FACT REMAINS THAT THEY ARE MOVING IN FAIRLY ORDERLY FASHION TOWARD THE GOAL OF A REFORMED AND MODERNIZED ETHIOPIA. PRESSURE FROM RADICAL ELEMENTS HAS OBVIOUSLY PLAYED A ROLE IN RECENT EVENTS AND MAY MOVE THE AFCC FURTHER AWAY FROM MODERATION OR WORSEN EXISTING FRICTIONS WITHIN THE

MILITARY, FURTHER AGGRAVATING THE SITUATION. BUT THERE IS ALSO A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT THE MILITARY WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A CONSENSUS AMONG ITS VARIOUS COMPONENTS AND ACHIEVE THE PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION OF ETHIOPIA INTO A STRONGER, MORE STABLE SOCIETY. AS LONG AS THIS POSSIBILITY EXISTS, WE FEEL IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO CONTINUE OUR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, SUCH SUPPORT ALSO SERVES THE PURPOSE

OF ENCOURAGING MODERATION. THE NEW ETHIOPIAN REGIME WILL FACE MANY DIFFICULT TASKS, AND INABILITY TO BRING ABOUT SIMPLE SOLUTIONS AND QUICK PROGRESS MIGHT TURN THE MILITARY IN FRUSTRATION TO DEMAGOGUERY, OR OTHER NON-CONSTRUCTIVE COURSES OF ACTION. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN HELP THE NEW REGIME IN DEALING WITH ETHIOPIA'S PROBLEMS WE CAN HELP TO KEEP IT ON A CONSTRUCTIVE COURSE. AS POST IS AWARE, THERE ARE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS ON AMOUNT OF ARMS THAT USG IS ABLE TO SUPPLY ON GRANT OR CREDIT BASIS. WE WILL OF COURSE KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER CONTINUING REVIEW SO THAT WE CAN ALTER OUR PROGRAMS SHOULD CONDITIONS REQUIRE IT.

9. FOR THE ABOVE REASONS WE ARE GOING AHEAD WITH OUR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID PROGRAMS. IT FOLLOWS THAT ANY ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY THIRD COUNTRIES WOULD ALSO SERVE THE SAME PURPOSES. ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY SAUDI
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ARABIA, WHETHER ECONOMIC AID OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, WOULD HELP ETHIOPIA TO MEET ITS IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. IT WOULD ALSO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY WHEREWITHAL OR FREE ETHIOPIAN RESOURCES FOR THE ACQUISITION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF POWER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, WITHOUT HAVING TO TAKE THE DISTASTEFUL STEP OF DIGGING DEEPLY INTO ITS MONETARY RESERVES.
END COMMENT.

10 SOMALIA: WHILE STILL DON'T KNOW THE CONTENTS OF THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY SIGNED DURING PRESIDENT PODGORNYS JULY 1974 VISIT TO SOMALIA, THE SOVIET UNION, WE BELIEVE, MAY HAVE CLARIFIED AND FORMALIZED ITS ACCESS TO FACILITIES AT BERBERA, THE FAVORITE PORT OF CALL FOR SOVIET SHIPS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND MAY HAVE OBTAINED THE USE OF AIRFIELDS FOR RECONNAISSANCE. THE DEGREE OF SOVIET CONTROL OVER THESE FACILITIES IS A CRUCIAL DETERMINANT OF SOMALI-USSR RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS' DISREGARD OF LOCAL SENSITIVITIES HAS CAUSED THEM TROUBLE ELSEWHERE, AND THERE COULD BE SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOMALIS IF THEY OVERPLAY THEIR

HAND. THE SOMALIS WOULD BE QUICK TO REACT TO SUSPECTED
SOVIET OVERTURES TO ETHIOPIA.

SOVIET INTEREST IN SOMALI FACILITIES IS QUICKENING
AS THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL DRAWS NEARER. THE
FRIENDSHIP TREATY REFLECTS THE USSR'S DESIRE TO PUT
BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH A HIGHLY FAVORED THIRD WORLD
COUNTRY ON A MORE FORMAL FOOTING. THE PRICE FOR SOMALI
ASSENT TO THE TREATY MAY BE SOVIET FINANCIAL AID TO THE
FALTERING SOMALI ECONOMY, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL ARMS. KISSINGER

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